



*An tSeirbhís Chúirteanna*  
*Courts Service*

Mr Edmund Honohan  
Master of the High Court  
Four Courts  
Dublin 7

8 January 2019

**Ventilation and damage to windows in the Master's Court in the Four Courts**

Dear Mr Honohan,

I refer to your letter to me dated 21 December 2018 concerning ventilation in your courtroom. This is the first time that concerns about ventilation in this courtroom have been brought to my attention or that of the Estate Management Unit.

I was made aware in December 2018 that three windows above the door of the courtroom had been broken. I understand that you have stated publicly that you did this. It is not acceptable that court premises should be damaged in this way. It represents a danger to health and safety both to yourself and to persons in the area. The repair of such damage has cost €340 and this represents a waste of the scarce resources of the Courts Service.

There is an air conditioning system within the courtroom which should be operating when the court is sitting. In relation to the windows which are not opening, the Estate Management Unit is making arrangements to fix both the external windows and the high level internal windows so that they can be opened. If there are issues of privacy when family law matters are being heard in the courtroom the use of the air conditioning system alone should be adequate.

If you have any further concerns about the ventilation of the courtroom these should be brought to the attention of the Estate Management Unit. If there is further damage to these windows we will seek reimbursement of the cost of repairing any damage done.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Burns  
Head of Infrastructure Services Directorate



21<sup>st</sup> December 2018

Re: Ventilation in the Master's Court

recd 2/1/19  
PB.

Dear Mr Burns,

Kevin O'Neill has advised me that you are the man I should write to about the above.

It has become impossible to continue to conduct hearings in this courtroom, day in, day out, without ventilation. Practitioners have raised the health risks with me and I have myself had to go through four colds in the four weeks to date.

As a workspace, the room is no longer up to compliance standards for myself and my registrar. The practitioners can come in and go out, but the registrar and myself have to sit in a fug of stuffy hot air listening to the coughs and sneezes which infect the room with various viruses causing respiratory and other complaints. There is no point in opening the (one opening) window as to do so causes (a) a draft and (b) ~~the~~ heat.

I am in my late sixties. I am not prepared to resume hearings in this courtroom in January unless the three small windows above the door farthest from the doors are removed. Please arrange for this work over the vacation.

Thanking you

Commander  
(the Master of the High Court)

Paul Burns.

cc. Brenda Ryan  
cc Kevin O'Neill